
The Abiding Word

The
ABIDING
WORD

AN ANTHOLOGY OF DOCTRINAL
ESSAYS FOR THE YEARS
1954-1955

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Publisher's Preface

The essays in this volume were selected by the Literature Board of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod from those presented at the District conventions of 1954 and 1955. They are made available as a continuation of Volume I (1946) and Volume II (1947), issued under the direction of the Centennial Literature Committee and edited by Dr. Theodore Laetsch. Since the original two volumes, published under the title **THE ABIDING WORD**, are still in demand, the publisher is encouraged to make these additional essays available as Volume III of the series.

THE PUBLISHER

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The Abiding Word

The Doctrine of the Angels

THIS convention will go down in history as the Centennial Convention. Although our District was organized one hundred years ago, there still are a number of men in our midst who were personally acquainted with some of the fathers and founders of our Synod in general and of the Western District in particular. From their pens and their lips we shall receive many thrilling accounts of the marvelous deeds of God. From Dr. Arndt's essay and from Rev. August Suelflow's jubilee book we shall learn some of the details concerning the heroes of the faith who helped to plant God's spiritual Zion not only on the banks of the Mississippi, but also far beyond, to the West Coast. We shall be told of their trials and triumphs. We shall be reminded of the debt of gratitude which we owe them and how we can, in a measure, repay this debt by passing on the torch of the pure Word and Sacraments to the generations yet to come.

You will note that Dr. Arndt's essay contains a section labeled "Controversies." From its very beginning the church of Jesus Christ was subject to conflicts, and such dissensions have plagued and are plaguing also our beloved Synod. In this present life we can only surmise the motives which lead men to sow the seeds of discord in the grain fields of God, but we can be very sure that behind it all is the dark and sinister prince of this world, Satan, together with his evil angels; nor shall we ever know in this world what an important part was played by the angels from the realms of glory to foil the Tempter's power. Our historians can record only the events that have taken place. They cannot know the innumerable instances in which our heavenly Father employed the watchers and the holy ones to protect His children and His church from those who would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come.

It is, therefore, altogether fitting and proper that we should, in this our centennial year, spend some time with the study of these marvelous creatures, the angels, and their powers for evil or for good.

I. ANGELS IN GENERAL

The term "angel" is an official title, denoting a messenger. In itself this word expresses neither goodness nor evil. From the Greek the term has passed over to the Latin, and so to languages derived from that (English, French, Spanish). Also the German (*Engel*) is derived from the same Greek word. The Hebrew term for angel, *maleach*, is from a root which signifies "to send." If one wishes to describe these beings according to their nature, they must be called spirits. According to what they *are*, they are spirits. According to what they *do*, they are angels. It is owing to this general meaning of the term that we find it applied in Scripture also to men who are discharging the office of an ambassador (Genesis 32, the messengers whom Jacob sent to Esau; James 2, the messengers who were sent to Jericho by Joshua). The Bible also applies this term to prophets, to priests, and to ministers of the Gospel. (Revelation 2 and 3)

The doctrine of the angels is a Scriptural doctrine. Whatever Holy Scripture teaches is an object of faith, and to deny this doctrine is a serious sin. But it is possible to be saved without knowing anything about the angels. In the Confessional Writings of our church we find no article in which the doctrine of the angels is specifically considered; only here and there a reference is made to them. This does not mean that this doctrine is of no importance or that it is unnecessary, but only this, that at that time no special error concerning this doctrine was agitating Christendom, so that there was no need to include a special paragraph or article in the Confessional Writings on this matter. However, already in the time of Christ the existence of angels was denied by the Sadducees (Acts 23:8): "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." Also in our days the existence of angels is often attacked and denied by unbelievers. They do this because they are filled with enmity toward the Word of God, which teaches that there are angels. The human mind, as Thomas Edison once said, does not comprehend even one tenth of one per cent of what

electricity is and can do. But this same finite mind does not hesitate to question the existence of heaven and hell. The same scientist who glibly teaches and professes to believe the most fantastic hypotheses about the origin and development of the universe and of life, will look upon you with pity if you declare your belief in a divine Creator and in the existence of angels, good and evil.

However, while it can be demonstrated that it is reasonable to assume the existence of angels, we depend entirely upon the Bible for our information concerning them. Holy Scripture testifies to the existence of angels from Genesis to Revelation. A great number of Scripture passages will be quoted in the course of this essay, so we need mention only a few here, such as Ps. 91:11: "He shall give His angels charge over thee." Matt. 4:11: "And, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." Heb. 1:6: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."

As surely as, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, angels do exist, equally surely according to the same Scriptures they were created by God. It is true, they are not mentioned in the account of the creation of the world, Genesis 1 and 2, but we must not conclude from this lack of a specific reference to angels that they had existed from all eternity. The following Scripture passages show that the creation of the angels by the hand of God took place in the same period of time in which all other things were created. We read Col. 1:16: "For by Him [the First-born of all creatures] were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible." Ps. 148:2: "Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts." This psalm contains a general admonition to all creatures to praise God. Among these creatures which are admonished to praise God, also the angels are mentioned, from which we can conclude correctly that these angels are also creatures of God.

As far as the time of their creation is concerned, we have to assume that the angels were made at some period within the six days of creation. Not previous to that, for God made the beginning with the creation of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1). Before the creation of the world only God, the Eternal One, was there (Ps. 90:2; John 1:1). Nor were they created after the six days of creation, because at the conclusion of the sixth day heaven and earth with all their host were completed (Gen. 2:1), and on the seventh

day God rested from all the things which He had made (Gen. 2:2), that is, God ceased to create anything further. The specific day on which the angels came forth from the creating hand of God is not revealed in Holy Scripture. On the basis of Job 38:4-7 most theologians conclude that the angels were made on the first day of creation, at the very beginning. Our *Lutheran Hymnal* takes a neutral attitude. It declares that the angels sang at the beginning as well as at the conclusion of the six days of creation:

Songs of praise the angels sang,
Heaven with alleluias rang,
When creation was begun,
When God spake and it was done. *L. H.*, 35:1

Then, when the earth was first poised in midspace,
Then, when the planets first sped on their race,
Then, when were ended the six days' employ,
Then all the sons of God shouted for joy. *L. H.*, 255:3

Some say, If there are angels, why is it that we do not see them? One might as well argue, If we have souls, why is it that they are invisible? Why is it that we cannot see air? We can feel it, but we cannot see it, and so also angels can assert themselves and can influence the things that we see round about us, but they are invisible to us. When a bottle of perfume is opened, no matter how carefully a person will look, he cannot see anything leaving the bottle, but he can notice the agreeable odor which emanates from it. When a magnet attracts a piece of iron, we can see how the iron moves toward the magnet. We cannot see the power that does this, but we can see the effect of this power, and it is that way also with the angels.

There is a persistent belief in some circles that the souls of departed believers become angels and that thus the number of angels is constantly increased. There is nothing in Holy Scripture to warrant such an assumption. Angels are not the disembodied spirits of the dead, because they are recorded as existing at the time of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, before any death of a human being had occurred. See Job 38:4, 7: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars [angels] sang together and all the sons of God [angels] shouted for joy?" See also Ps. 8:4, 5: "Thou hast made him [man]

a little lower than the angels." Hence man is entirely different from them.

According to the theory of pre-existence, as taught by Origen in the third century, all human souls, as well as the angels, were created at once. On account of sin committed in the pre-existent state, the souls were condemned to enter into material bodies. One pure soul attached itself to Jesus (the Logos) and at His incarnation became the uncontaminated (by sin) human soul of Christ. This theory is an adaptation of old pagan speculations and never found favor in the Christian Church, because it is unscriptural.

Angels are not spirits in the same sense in which God is a spirit. The nature of the angel is different from the nature of God in the same manner as the nature of the creature is different from that of the Creator. God is an infinite spirit, angels are finite. That is, they are dependent upon God. Scripture speaks of them as spirits in such passages as Heb. 1:14: "Are they not all ministering spirits?" Here the Bible calls angels spirits in order to show the difference between the angels and all the other creatures which God has made, and it wishes to express thereby that angels are not composed of body and soul as human beings are. In Luke 24:39 Jesus tells His disciples to behold His hands and His feet, that it is He Himself. He added, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." Here the Lord wished to prove to His disciples that He was indeed the same Lord Jesus with whom they had walked and talked while He was in the flesh upon earth before His death and resurrection. He now was in a glorified body, hence no longer confined to a given space, but could in a moment make Himself visible and invisible. Yet, He showed, He was not a spirit, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." In Eph. 6:12 the wicked angels, being spirits, are contrasted with beings of flesh and blood.

If, then, the angels do not have bodies, how can we explain the fact that they often appeared in the form and appearance of men? In many places Holy Scripture declares that angels thus made themselves manifest. Abraham saw them (Genesis 18); also Lot (Genesis 19); Elisha saw the shining chariot, and his servant saw the angel host around Dothan. In the New Testament we have the vision of Zacharias (Luke 1:11); Mary (Luke 1:26-38); the shep-

herds at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:10, 13); the women which came to anoint the body of our Lord (Luke 24:4); the disciples at the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:10); and John had many visions of them. This does not nearly exhaust the list. We are told that the angels talked to human beings, walked with them, ate and drank with them. That they assumed human bodies for a certain temporary purpose is clearly proved. How these bodies were constituted, whether God made them out of nothing at that moment or whether the angels themselves made up these bodies out of some material which was already existing, we do not know. In Ps. 78:23-25 we read: "He . . . had rained down manna upon them to eat. . . . Man did eat angels' food." (Luther: "Angel-bread.") This does not mean that it is the food of the angels or that it is prepared by the angels, but that it descends from heaven, the abode of the angels. It is a reference to the manna which sustained the Israelites for forty years.

Since everything that God made was "very good" (Gen. 1:31), it follows that originally also the host of angels was entirely free from sin and evil. Since this happy state of affairs lasted only a brief time as far as a large number of them is concerned, it also follows that the angels were created with freedom of will. Otherwise they would have been mere automata. They were not created to be morally indifferent, still less with proneness to sin, but they were by divine grace positively good. This original condition of the angels is called their state of grace. In this state the angels correctly knew God, loved Him above all things, believed Him truthful, confided in His goodness, obeyed His commands, and had the hope of endless life in bliss. Their intellect and will were so constituted that they could perform the act of faith and every act of obedience from pure love of God without being in any way coerced. Having thus been created with the knowledge, righteousness, and holiness to be conformed to the will of God, it is not improper to say that they were created after the divine image. Such a relation seems to be indicated in the name "sons of God," by which the Scriptures refer to them. (Job 38:7)

Why did God create angels? We might counter this question with, Why did God create the universe? Why did He create man? Scripture does not indicate that the all-sufficient God felt the need of companionship when He formed the angels. It does state that

they are stationed near the throne of God (Dan. 7:10); that they are intimately associated with Him (Job 1:6; 2:1); that they are His ministers that do His pleasure, hearkening unto the voice of His word (Ps. 103:20, 21). God also ordained that they should serve man.

Of the angels in general it may be said that they are immutable. That is, they are not subject to change. They do not grow older in the sense that we do, for they are timeless.

Angels are likewise immortal. The evil angels are condemned to suffer in *eternal* fire. The good angels *always* behold the face of our heavenly Father. Jesus said (Luke 20:36) of the departed saints: "Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels." Angels are substances not having essential parts like man (a body and a soul) or integral parts, like the head or chest or feet or arms. Having been created, they could be destroyed by God or changed. They are, however, in themselves incorruptible because they contain no element of decay nor anything that could destroy them, and hence they are of endless existence. Accordingly we could speak of the angels as being eternal; but since eternity is an essential attribute of God, the term "sempiternity" has been coined, meaning with a beginning, but without end. (This also applies to men.)

They are highly mobile. From the ninth chapter of Daniel (verse 21) we note that the angels indeed can move very swiftly to carry out the commands of God. Daniel says: "While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel . . . being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me . . . At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved." God had given the angel the command to bring an answer to Daniel, and the angel was there before Daniel had finished his prayer. But no angel is omnipresent.

Their number is fixed. Jesus said that angels neither marry nor are given in marriage (Matt. 22:30). While a masculine pronoun is invariably used when reference is made to an angel, these creatures have no bodies and are, therefore, sexless. Being immortal, their number never decreases; being sexless, they have no power to propagate their species, and so they never increase. Marriage was instituted among human beings on earth to preserve mankind

from extinction, because only two of them were created in the beginning. Since there is no death in heaven or hell, marriage is abolished there, although, in heaven, love will abide forever.

Holy Scripture indicates that there are various ranks or offices among the angels. These are all listed in the hymn stanza:

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
Bright seraphs, cherubim, and thrones,
Raise the glad strain, Alleluia!
Cry out, dominions, principedoms, powers,
Virtues, archangels, angels' choirs,
Alleluia! Alleluia! *L. H.*, 475:1

The Roman Catholic Church, following the teaching of Dionysius of Alexandria, distinguishes a triple celestial hierarchy: the heaven of heavens, the abode of the Most Holy Trinity; next the heaven which belongs to the holy angels, and finally the nether heaven which is reserved for man. The angelic hierarchy in turn is a triple one, and in each hierarchy are three orders of choirs of angels:

The first hierarchy is in the immediate presence of the Trinity, beyond the veil. It consists of the seraphim, cherubim, and thrones. They are occupied unceasingly with singing and proclaiming the glory of God.

The second hierarchy consists of dominions, powers, and virtues. The dominions direct the good angels in their offices; the powers restrain the might of the devil and his evil angels; the virtues are the ones through whom the Lord performs miracles and exercises discipline.

The third order or choir of angels consists of principalities, who are in charge of countries and states; of archangels, who govern and guard groups of people; and angels, who direct and guard individual humans.

There is, of course, nothing in all Holy Scripture which in any way indicates that these nine orders of angels function in the way described above or that one of these groups is superior to the other. But the Roman theologians go a step further. They spend much time with such idle questions as whether the difference in the hierarchies is due to natural gifts which the angels possess or to acquired ones. What control do angels of the higher hierarchy have over those of the lower orders? Did some of every hierarchy and

choir fall into sin? Was the angel who is the chief of those who sinned (Satan) also the chief of those who up to that time had not sinned? Will those among men who are saved be admitted to all the hierarchies of angels? (They boldly answer in the affirmative.)

Concerning the attempt to classify angels according to their rank, Luther writes: "They (the papists) boast that Dionysius was one of St. Paul's disciples, but that is not true, for he is full of futile and senseless babbling, arguing about the heavenly hierarchy, distinguishing nine choirs or ranks (of angels). But who does not realize that here we have nothing but silly and futile ideas? Who said that there are nine choirs of angels? To sum up, these things are foolish, worthy to be studied and esteemed by the papists, because they oppose the true doctrine so stubbornly."

At the same time Luther writes: "There is a difference between the angels just as there is between the devils. Princes and rulers have great, eminent angels, as can be seen from Daniel 10. Children and ordinary servants have lesser angels. For one angel is always greater, stronger, and wiser than the other. The same is true of the devils."

On the basis of Is. 6:2, 3; Heb. 9:5; Col. 1:16; Eph. 1:21; 1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9, and other texts, we believe that there are various ranks and orders among the angels, but what they are and how they differ from one another we do not know and cannot know. Therefore we should not speculate. There is no proof that some have a natural superiority over the others. Apparently the reference is to the dignity which the various offices and services impart to them. We must not overlook the fact that there are also degrees of rank and dignity and power in the evil angels. Holy Scripture speaks of one of them as "the devil." The Greek word is "*diabolos*," a name which is never used in the plural and which, like Satan, always is applied to the leader of the devils. Satan is also known as the Adversary, the Tempter, the great dragon, the old serpent, Beelzebub, the strong man armed, and the roaring lion, the prince of this world, the prince of the darkness of this world. It is true that usually only one devil is mentioned, as though there were not more, but this is done in order to show the contrast between his kingdom and that of Christ.

From the very ancient times down to the present age the account of the cohabitation of the "sons of God" with the "daughters of

men" in Gen. 6:2 has been interpreted of angel marriages. Many of the Jewish (and some of the Christian) theologians have held this view. But the orthodox teachers of the church in all ages have repudiated it as something monstrous. The true meaning of the text in Gen. 6:2 is this: the "sons of God," that is, the members of the godly race who still kept up at least an external connection with God's people, or who were descendants from God-fearing parents, took to wives "daughters of men," that is, worldly women.

The Angel of the Lord, or the Angel of the Covenant, is mentioned frequently in Scripture, especially in the Old Testament. This is none other than our Lord Christ. He appeared to the patriarchs and to the chosen people at critical moments of their history, to confirm the promise of the Messiah made to them. To determine where in a given passage the angel is a created spirit or the Lord Himself, Quenstedt suggests this rule: "Whenever and wherever the name Jehovah or a divine attribute or work or divine worship is accorded to an angel appearing to the patriarchs, and other believers, there not a created but the uncreated Angel, namely, the Son of God, the Captain of the heavenly host, the Lord of all the angels, is to be understood. By an ineffable condescension He appeared to the patriarchs in human form and thus gave them, as it were, a preview of His future incarnation. At these appearances Jesus, of course, was not truly incarnate. That occurred only in the personal union which was effected when He was born of the Virgin Mary and thus partook of our flesh and blood. When He appeared in a visible form to the Old Testament saints, He temporarily assumed a certain human form, which was put aside again after it had answered its purpose. In these instances Jesus Himself was personally the Angel or the Messenger of the Holy Trinity to bring some comforting message or some important directive to the saints of the Old Testament."

II. THE EVIL ANGELS

What has been said so far applies to all angels in general. In the following sections we make a particular study of the two categories of angels, the evil and the good. It is customary in theological circles to discuss the good angels first because of their dignity and perfection and their love for God and mankind. But we plan

to close this essay with a note of joy and triumph, and for this reason we will consider the evil angels first.

The devil is variously described (by those who claim they have seen him) as a goat, a bull, a dog, a bat, a big, black (or red) man with horns, claws, hoofs, and a tail. Medieval artists pictured him as being hideously ugly, but in modern art and on the stage he is usually portrayed as a suave, urbane gentleman, distinguished-looking, with an air of being slightly bored and somewhat sad — certainly not as an object of horror and revulsion. The devil has gone underground, and the intelligentsia no longer believes that the devil exists, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Few facts in human experience are better documented than the fact of the existence of devils. First there is the incontrovertible evidence of Holy Scripture. It usually speaks of evil angels in the singular number as we have already heard, but either by this name it designates the chief of the devils (Luke 11:14-28), or it is used collectively of all the evil spirits in general, whose number is legion, that is, it consists of many thousands (Luke 8:27-33). The name "Satan" occurs 51 times in the Bible. It is a proper noun, always in the singular number. "*Diabolos*" (devil) occurs 35 times, always in the singular, and is the Greek equivalent to Satan. The word "*daimonion*" (devil) is used both in the singular and in the plural and occurs 56 times. The writings of the ancient church fathers and the legends of the saints of the Roman Catholic Church abound in lurid descriptions of personal encounters with the arch fiend. Martin Luther has described how, when he translated the Bible, the devil often appeared and debated with him the proper interpretation of the Hebrew text. On one occasion he is said to have hurled an inkstand at him. The ink left a mark which can still be seen on the wall of Luther's cell in the Wartburg. However, this is only a legend. Dr. E. G. Schwiebert writes in *Luther and His Times*: "In all likelihood the story (of the inkwell) was invented by the Luther biographer Ratzeberger, the medical doctor who wrote toward the end of the 16th century, plentifully embellishing the Reformer's life with many stories from tradition or his own imagination. Nowhere in Luther's writings, not even in his *Table Talks*, is there a reference to throwing an inkwell at the devil." But the surest proof that there is a devil, outside the Bible, is the

devastation, material as well as spiritual, which Satan has caused and is causing in this world.

Holy Scripture testifies that the devil was not created evil but became evil. He is the one that made the beginning of sinning. He was not led astray by anyone, but began to sin of his own free will. Jesus said, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own." The lie and the consequence of the lie, sin, and the consequence of sin, death, is strictly his own. Holy Scripture says (1 John 3:8): "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." The devil invented sin and brought it into the world. Jesus testified to the Jews who attempted to kill Him (John 8:44): "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." Created perfect, he abode not in the truth; a father of liars and of the lie and of sin and a murderer. That is how Holy Scripture describes the devil.

What it was that brought about the Fall is something which we can only surmise. If we study the devil's activities which he displayed at the time when he tempted mankind to fall into sin or at the time when he tempted Jesus Himself, we can imagine that pride was the cause of his fall; but if we ask, How was such a fall possible, when all angels were good and holy originally and free of all sin? we are not able to answer. This is one of the many statements of Holy Scripture concerning which we reach a limit beyond which we cannot go, but we must, so to say, lay our hands on our mouth and confess our ignorance.

Also here, in respect to the fall of the angels, there is a limit to what we can know. We do not know how sin could come into the world, how it was possible for perfectly good angels to sin and why it was that so many of them fell into sin. How long their state of grace lasted we cannot say. We know that a separation took place, after which some were permanently good, others permanently evil. There are those who think that it took place on the second day, because the usual formula "God saw that it was good," which Moses inserts in the account of each day's work, is wanting in his account of the second day. This proves nothing, however,

because the statement at the end of the sixth day remedies this seeming defect. We can only say that the separation took place before the fall of man, because the Tempter appears as a lying spirit at that time; while the fact that God appoints the cherubim to guard Eden after the expulsion of Adam indicates that the good angels had by that time become confirmed in their original holiness, immune from sin and from temptation by their evil comrades; for which reason they could be entrusted with that duty. Apart from the first angel that sinned it cannot be proved that the sin of the angels that fell was self-originated. The Scriptures seem to indicate that the contrary was the case and that their sin was due to the pernicious influence of the very Tempter who occasioned man's sin, and thus sin came to them through temptations from without (John 8:44: "The devil," not "devils"). To our mind it is not logical to assume that Satan seduced a large number of his fellow angels in the space of a few moments. It also is illogical to believe that they fell into sin gradually, over a period of time, singly and in groups, until many millions of them had rejected God and heaven and decided to cast their lot with Beelzebub and hell. We shall touch upon this problem briefly when we deal with the number of evil angels. Concerning the expulsion of the evil spirits, Jesus Himself said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18); and St. John writes in the 12th chapter of Revelation: "Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, nor was their place found any more in heaven"; and Peter writes (2 Peter 2:4): "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

The state of the evil angels is a hopeless one. They are confirmed in wickedness and cannot but sin. They are now in "chains of darkness," bound like prisoners already sentenced and "reserved unto judgment," that is, awaiting the execution of their sentence (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). Everlasting fire is already "prepared" for them (Matt. 25:41). Scripture states that God "spared them not," He showed them no pity; appointed no Redeemer for them; did not allot a time of grace for them; gave them no opportunity for repentance, nor do they have any means of grace. Naturally there has been much speculation why God should grant us equally sin-

ful human beings His favor and why He withheld it from the evil angels. Gerhard, in his *Loci*, lists the following probable reasons:

1. Not all the angels fell; some of the angels remained holy; whereas in Adam the whole human race fell. (Thus all humans would have been lost unless a Redeemer was appointed for them.)

2. The devils did not fall by having been tempted and seduced by another, but were led astray by their own malice, while man fell because he was tempted.

In their confirmed state of wickedness the evil angels are no longer morally indifferent and free to choose either good or evil, but they have a choice only between this form or that form of wickedness. Dante has inscribed over the entrance to hell: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here." This is correct theology. The devils know no hope. We reject the error of those who hold that the punishment of the damned and of the devils will have an end.

Unwarranted speculations are sometimes indulged in by comparison of the sin by which the angels fell and the fall of men. A sharp contrast is drawn between man's sin and that of the devil and his angels. The sin of the latter, being self-originated, is represented as being so much worse than the sin of man as to render the devils unsavable. In the first place, it is highly probable that all the devils, with the exception of Beelzebub, were tempted as man was tempted. Second, it is a dangerous thing to extenuate or minimize in any way the sin of man. It is true, this sin came from without and as a result of temptation. But how does that make his sin any less grievous than if it had originated in himself? 1 Tim. 2:14: "Adam was not deceived"; he had sufficient light and knowledge. There was nothing in the sin of the angels that rendered it radically different from the sin of man. Devils are unredeemed simply because God in His eternal purpose made no provision for their salvation, and for no other reason. It is idle and a waste of precious time to characterize their sin as rendering them unsavable.

God permits them to go about among us until the Day of Judgment, seeking whom they may devour. They are permitted to tempt men, that we may be kept ever on our guard, watching, praying, strengthening ourselves with God's Word, and living constantly by faith (Matt. 8:28ff.; 2 Peter 2:4; Luke 8:27, 28; 22:31; Acts 5:3;

Eph. 2:1, 2; 6:12). Since Christ redeemed us, the demons are bound; they can enslave only those who voluntarily become their victims. Christ triumphed over them by His death and resurrection. He banished from the kingdom of His church these enemies of the human race; but they still have power to tempt Christians and to lay a thousand snares that they may entangle us in sin (Col. 2:15; Luke 11:14; Eph. 6:11). Wherever the devils may roam, they carry their hell with them. There will be a public confirmation of the devils' condemnation on the Last Day, when they will be cast into the lake of fire at the command of Christ. (Rev. 20:10, 14)

Regarding the origin of evil, John Stuart Mill wrote: "It is plain, in the face of the evils of the world, that God cannot at the same time be almighty and all-wise and all-good. If He is all-wise, then He is not strong enough to have His way, or else He is not quite good enough to care. If He is all-good, then He must lack either wisdom or power." Similar views have been expressed by many others. As Christians we know that such a view is utterly wrong. At the same time no complete explanation of the problem of evil in the world can be made. We are here in a realm that goes beyond our comprehension. There is no answer to the question, How did evil get started in the first place? We know that Satan rebelled against God, but how a creature of God can conceive of sin is a mystery. We know only that sin had a beginning and that evil is now present in the world, being transmitted by the fall of Adam to all mankind. There is no answer to the question, Why did God create human beings when He knew in advance that they would fall into sin? All the evil and the suffering that vex us could have been prevented if human life had never come into existence; but these are mere idle speculations. We must pass them by for this life at least and concentrate on the part of our problem that can be answered.

In the first place, what would happen if God removed the power to sin? Dwight Moody, the great evangelist, used to illustrate this situation very vividly. He told of going to a prison and finding there the best-behaved people in the world. They didn't rob anyone, they committed no murder, they did not embezzle any funds, they did not get drunk nor even break any traffic laws, yet there was no love of God or goodness there. Quite the opposite. The prisoners had simply been deprived of the power to commit such

gross sins. Who would choose to live in a prison? A similar condition obtains in monasteries and convents. Yet if God put a stop to all evil actions, the result would be that all mankind would be in a sort of strait jacket, but the heart would remain in the same evil condition.

Even in the Garden of Eden God placed a tree of temptation, and today man grows only when he has evil to overcome. Some parents think that it is their duty to make all decisions for a child and to keep it from all temptation. Such a child is not morally strong; it has no character. It is a hothouse plant, not a hardy fruit tree.

God does not destroy sin, because He has a better way of handling the evil in the world. Have you ever wondered why the forces of Satan have failed in their efforts to crush the church and to rule the world? There are far more wicked people in the universe than there are servants of the one true God. Even in this land of ours, which is supposedly a Christian country, there are more people who have rejected Christ than accepted Him. Why doesn't evil completely blot out the true religion? It would seem that after only a few generations Satan could be universally triumphant. Yet such a terrible catastrophe never occurs. The evil always collapses, and the forces of God always continue on their way. Mohammedan invasions threatened to destroy Christendom on numerous occasions, but they never did. The mighty forces of the French Revolution threatened to plunge all mankind into atheism, yet that movement went to pieces without accomplishing its evil goal. At the present time communism is presenting an almost insurmountable challenge to the Christian world, but communism, too, will fail. Persecution, skepticism, indifference, all have shaken the church, but have failed to destroy it. Why?

Part of the answer lies in the protecting hand of God, of course. He has promised that nothing will prevail against His elect. There is another answer, however, that is often overlooked. God doesn't have to destroy evil, for it is the very nature of evil to be self-destructive. There is contained in the heart of every evil action its own death warrant. We are told that all "they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." That is true, not only because of the judgment of God, but because of the very nature of the sword. Violence begets violence and thus becomes its own execu-

tioner. Nothing enduring, great or small, can ever be designed or made without love. The devil and his followers are incapable of love and goodness. That is why Nazism failed; that is why atheistic communism is doomed to fail. That's why Satan himself always has failed and always will fail in his fury to destroy the church of Jesus Christ.

God desires just as much as we do to drive sin out of this world. The only difference between His plan and ours is that He wants us to do some of the work of eliminating sin. He shows us the way and will provide all the power and help that we need. Then it is up to us to put those plans into operation and by God's grace to win the victory over sin. He tells us to call upon Him in trouble, and He will deliver us. In other words, everything necessary for the victory over sin has been provided for us. This is especially true of our own personal lives. Through the power of God we can overcome sin. We can defeat Satan, the old enemy of man. Through the atoning blood of Christ, through the new life dwelling within us, sin can be subdued. Paul says: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). John writes: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," (1 John 5:4)

The famous writer H. G. Wells produced a story called "The man who could work miracles." He tells how a simple-minded Englishman was given control of the world. He was delighted and was sure that he could remedy many wrongs, but the more he tried, the more tangled the world became, until in desperation he wished that everything could be restored to its original condition and his miraculous power taken from him. That story contains a good lesson for all of us. When we begin to tell God how to run His world, we get into more tangles than we can unsnarl. Like Jesus in Gethsemane, we must say, "Not my will, but Thine, be done!"

I walk in danger all the way,
 The thought shall never leave me
 That Satan, who has marked his prey,
 Is plotting to deceive me.
 This foe, with hidden snares,
 May seize me unawares
 If e'er I fail to watch and pray.
 I walk in danger all the way. *L. H.*, 413:1

The devil's entire time is spent in plotting against God and against God's people, and this feud on the part of the devil extends back to the dawn of history. The old serpent that brought humanity to fall did not want to lose his prey. That is why this enemy of God also became the archenemy of those who love God. He tried to destroy the people out of whom Christ was to be born, the Children of Israel, through the great oppression in the land of Egypt. He stirred up the heathen people against Jerusalem. He seduced the people of God to serve idols and to become like their heathen neighbors. When Christ nevertheless came out of Israel and was born to a descendant of David, then he stirred up the Jews against Christ. The devil rages and roars constantly against Christ and His church. At one time he tries to destroy the church with fire and sword. On another occasion he will insinuate himself, with his lies and temptations, into the church itself. It is very clear that we live at a time of which Jesus spoke in Matt. 24:24: "There shall rise false Christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Satan uses the same old pack of lies which he used in tempting Eve, the mother of all humanity. Did God really say? Is it really true that the Bible is God's Word? Is it really true that God said that faith alone can save us? Is it really true that God said that a Christian must be an enemy of all ungodliness, of all worldly lust, that he must strive after holiness in this world and be serious about it? That he must live according to God's will, that he must suffer, even though he is God's child? And always the answer which the father of lies gives through his followers is the same: "God never did say anything like that." "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened." And there are always people in all congregations and in all church bodies who believe and follow these lies on the part of the devil.

What a horrible thing, that it is possible for Satan to lead Christians, who have been saved from the kingdom of darkness and have become God's children, away from God and their Savior and to bring them into eternal damnation! For instance, Judas was such a person; he could not resist the devil and was devoured by him, and the same danger threatens you and me. There are two varieties of temptations, those which please our old Adam and those

which cause him pain. The first variety causes men to sin with joy, considering it great fun; the other leads us to sin through grief, fear, despair. By either means Satan can entice us to do that which is evil. One can slip and fall on a smooth pavement, and one can stumble and fall on one that is strewn with debris. The opportunities to fall are equally great either way.

The devil never rests. He is always devising ways and means to cause us to lose our faith or to commit a sin. He is a skilled student of human nature. He knows whom to entice with evil lust, whom to incite to murder, whom to surfeit with food and drink, whom to fill with envy. He rouses some to fear and others to become overbearingly self-confident. He watches our habits and appetites and never ceases in his efforts to harm us. Before we commit a sin, he makes us overbold and self-confident; afterwards he makes his victims lose all hope. When he is out to deceive us, he can transform his manner and ways into those of an angel of light. He attends all public worship, hoping to distract us and to steal away the precious Word. Only too often he succeeds. As Caspari said, "The black devil is not nearly so dangerous as the white devil."

First the devil suppresses the sense of shame and guilt in his victims. After the sin has been committed, he restores these feelings in order to induce the sinner to cover the old sin with new ones rather than to seek refuge in Christ. At first he makes sin appear no greater than a grain of sand. Afterwards he magnifies it into a mountain that crushes the sinner. Thus the course of sin is a threefold one. First the devil whispers: Commit this evil; it is only a trifle. Second, the devil tells his victim: You have plenty of time for repentance, there is no need to hurry. Third: You have waited too long; it is too late to repent; you are condemned and forever rejected; there is nothing left for you but despair. The devil urges us to commit sin; when we have done so, he accuses us before God and our own conscience.

The pirates who used to infest the sea lanes in olden times were chiefly interested in ships that were well laden with treasure. The infernal fiend pursues those the most who have the precious jewels of faith, the true Christians.

The devil is happy when nobody believes in him. He works underground, out of sight. Although there is abundant evidence

to prove that he exists, the devil sees to it that all the evidence is overlooked. He is an archdeceiver. Most people dare not witness against him, lest they be considered unscientific. Men produce scientific wonders, and yet they are gripped by dooming fear and helplessness regarding the products they have made. This insecurity is the devil's work; he sees to it that folks believe in their own brains, rather than in God. The brains of man have led him to the brink of despair, and the devil laughs.

Another trick of the devil is to seduce a man through something that is good in itself. The devil makes a man proud of his humility. He makes a man think he is spiritual when actually the man is lazy. One of the devil's strongest snares is procrastination. The devil doesn't care how much you regret the consequences of your wrongdoing. Just so you don't repent of your sins. He goes to church with you every Sunday; he is too smart to say that the Bible is wrong, but he is always reminding you that there is no hurry about being a doer of the Word. He tells his victims that accepting Jesus is a good thing, but to wait until tomorrow — not now. There must be tens of thousands who have the good intention to free their souls of the devil's chains someday. There are perhaps more people in hell for that reason than for any other.

Watch against the devil's snares
Lest asleep he find thee;
For indeed no pains he spares
To deceive and blind thee.
Satan's prey Oft are they
Who secure are sleeping
And no watch are keeping. *L. H., 446:2*

Sinning has become a standing characteristic of the evil angels. Having lost their concreated grace, their intellect became darkened. They lost their judgment of what is right and good. That is what the Lord means when He says, "He [the devil] abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." Lying is, so to speak, their native element, and they are constantly busy disseminating lies. The very name "devil" indicates this, for "*diabolos*" means one who slanders, a prevaricator, and the Hebrew word "*satan*" has a similar meaning. The devil slanders God to man (Gen. 3:5, 6 and Matt. 4:6) and men to God (Job 1 and 2). He misleads men from the service of God to idolatry (1 Cor. 10:20). How foolishly,

however, their corrupt intellect acts can be seen from the eagerness with which the devils promoted the destruction of Christ. They seem not to have perceived that by so doing they inflicted the greatest harm on themselves. Quenstedt remarks that when the devil said to Christ, "If Thou art the Son of God," he either had no certain knowledge of the divinity of Christ, but merely suspected it; or, if he had a definite knowledge of the fact, he was plainly insane if he thought that he could destroy Jesus.

Luther makes this observation: "The devil cannot know nor see what God effects in human hearts and what the Holy Ghost does in a man. He is excluded from such things. For instance, the devil did not know that the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin Mary when she conceived Christ; he did not hear the song of the angels during the night in which Christ was born; he did not hear the hymns of praise and the benediction by Zacharias and Simeon, nor did he hear anything of what Christ said to His disciples on the night of Maundy Thursday. He did not see the transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor; the angels drove him away, else he would have known that Christ indeed was the true Messiah. Even though he said at times that he knew that Jesus was the Christ, one should not believe his words, since he is a lying spirit." (St. Louis Edition, 1887, XXII, 740, 741)

Satan is so powerful that he could reduce the entire earth to a heap of ruins and destroy all human beings. Especially is his power very great in his own kingdom and among those who are serving him directly. And yet his power has limits, and he can be restrained and is being restrained by God, otherwise he would kill even those who are in his own kingdom in order that they might not be taken away from him through the Word of God and our mission endeavors. God puts a bridle upon him. We are always in danger and are afraid of him, but God sees to it that the devil's wicked designs against us cannot be carried out.

From Job 1 and 2 we learn that the devil had great power and control over Job's goods, his children, and his body, but he was not allowed to touch anything until God gave him permission. We can see from this that the devil also has power over Christians, but cannot as much as touch one hair on their heads without God's consent.

Under the leadership of Satan the forces of evil attempt to plunge Christians into unbelief and sin. Day by day they coax and incite you and me to deny the Gospel of the forgiveness of sin or to doubt it; they incite us to murder our neighbor or to hate him; to look upon our neighbor's wife to lust after her. They have more than human power, and they lay their traps with super-human cunning. They have a deeper knowledge of the powers of nature than we have. By means of witchcraft they can do things which human wisdom cannot understand. They know our hearts better than we do. They are the masters and lords of this world. The unbelievers carry out Satan's commands. The goods of this world are used by him for his purposes. The evil daily news is in his power; unbelieving theologians are in his power; the astrologers and witch masters are in his power. The pope is in his power and serves him. Worst of all, our flesh and blood is by nature in his power and serves him. Our love for money serves him.

Boldly he walks about in our midst and claims he is a better and more orthodox Lutheran than anybody else. How else can we explain the noise and confusion about the *Common Confession*; the accusations about false doctrine; the stubborn refusal to accept explanations; the vile slanders which are being hurled at our leaders?

What weapons can we use against such an unscrupulous foe? We have the truth, yes, but Satan never was interested in the truth. By nature we are helpless, and the situation would be hopeless if it were not for the restraining power of God. Luther says in this connection: "Why are you afraid, why are you filled with terror? Do you not know that the prince of the world has been judged? He is no lord, no prince any more; you have another, stronger Lord, Jesus, who has overcome him and bound him. Let the prince of this world make an evil face, show his teeth, paw the ground with his hoofs, threaten and act up, he can harm you no more than a mean dog that is fastened to a chain. He can bark and run back and forth and jerk on his chain, but he cannot bite you, because he is tied up and you can stay out of the way. It is that way with the devil toward every Christian. Everything depends upon this, that we do not become oversecure, but that in the fear of God we pray diligently. Then this dog on the chain cannot harm us. But if we become overconfident and go on with-

out paying any attention to such matters, then we might get so near to this dog on the chain that he can attack us and bite us."

The devil's faithful and able assistant in luring men to perdition is the world. 1 John 5:19: "The whole world lieth in wickedness." "Therefore love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:15-17). The world is exceedingly adept at leading men astray. She has a twofold method: pleasure and persecution; the one to draw, the other to drive. Potiphar's wife tried to draw Joseph with sinful pleasure; failing, she persecuted him and drove him into prison. Similarly the world woos us with seductive blandishments. If we spurn them, her smiles turn to frowns, and her proffered favors become venomous persecutions, relentless and vindictive. Jeremiah's enemies said of him, "Come, and let us smite him with the tongue" (Jer. 18:18). In his forceful way Dr. William Dallmann wrote: "An evil tongue is the devil's easy chair; when that wags, he can cross his legs and fold his arms and tilt his hat on the back of his head and take a good nap, for his work goes on apace without him; he presses the button, and tongues do the rest."

Not only the world, but also our own flesh and blood is a strong and most persistent ally of Satan. The imagination of man's heart being evil from his youth, God's Law is a galling yoke upon our shoulders. We do not want to trust in God and depend upon His strength from heaven. We want to be like God and rely upon ourselves. I once heard a Unitarian preacher broadcast: "If I cannot earn my own way into heaven, I do not want to go there." Unless he repents, he won't go there. With such people Satan has an easy task. Only too often we are eagerly expectant for the devil's and the world's invitation. We sometimes ask to be asked. We walk in the counsel of the ungodly and sit in the seat of the scornful, and then we complain about the grievous temptations we must endure. If we know ourselves at all, we know these things are true and that St. James speaks truly when he says chapter 1, v. 14: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." These are the "fleshly lusts which war against the soul,"

spoken of in 1 Peter 2:11. No wonder St. Paul cries out, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24)

Bengel says, "We do not pray that there be no temptation, but that it may not conquer us." Luther says truly, "We cannot help being exposed to assaults, but we can pray that we may not fall and perish under them." We ask that the temptation may not be too severe for our strength or too long for our endurance, according to the comforting passage, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

Paul was one of God's well-beloved sons whose faith and patience were tested to the utmost. Wrote the apostle: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet me. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Who would not gladly bear the same affliction if he could hear the same comforting assurance: "My grace is sufficient for thee"? "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him." (James 1:12)

Many people who have never thought the matter over are astonished to hear that the word "angel" can be applied to the evil spirits as well as to the good. In ordinary speech we always designate the good and faithful spirits by that name. Another common custom is to speak of "the devil" as though there were only one foul fiend. If that were true, he would have to be omnipresent, like God. As a matter of fact, there are an immense number of evil spirits, so many that several of them can be assigned to spy upon and try to seduce one human being. 2 Peter 2:4: "the angels that sinned"; Jude 6: "the angels which kept not their first estate"; Luke 8:30: [His name was] "Legion, because many devils were entered into him." Matt. 12:45: "Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself." Rev. 12:7: "The dragon . . . and his angels." Rev. 12:4: "And his [the great red dragon's] tail drew [swept down] the third part of the stars of heaven and

did cast them to the earth.” This may imply that one third of the angels defected when Satan fell. Johannes Wierus, a 16th-century theologian, wrote a treatise entitled *Concerning the Artifices of Demons*, in which he calculated that Satan has 1,111 legions, each comprising 6,666 demons, or a total of 7,405,926 “without any possibility of error in the calculations.” On the other hand, Martinus Barrhaus, a Swiss theologian, computed the total number of devils to be exactly 2,665,866,746,664. The reason we so often refer to the devil in the singular number is that we have his kingdom in mind in contrast with the church, the kingdom of Christ.

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant says: “It would be stupid to believe any tales of this sort — concerning spooks — without the most careful investigation. On the other hand, it would be equally stupid to deny all such phenomena categorically.” While we do not deny the possibility of occult occurrences, we must be very careful not to credit every tale of the supernatural. From childhood our imagination has been stimulated by ghost stories, and try as we will, many of us cannot shake off these deep impressions entirely. Even adults are sometimes filled with senseless fright when they experience unusual sights and sounds. We are incapable, at such times, to exercise sound judgment, and as a result we firmly believe that we saw and heard something which cannot be explained on the basis of our everyday experience. When people solemnly affirm that they have experienced occult phenomena, they are probably 100% honest in their opinions and likewise 100% mistaken. In other words, the countless stories of those who insist that they personally experienced these things prove nothing. The Society for Occult Phenomena offers prizes for indisputable instances of spooks. I do not know whether such a prize has ever been paid. That also proves nothing. Scientists have decided that such things do not happen, and they resolutely rule out all evidence, no matter how well authenticated it may be. There is no getting around the fact that diabolical apparitions, specters, ghosts, are among the means by which the devil seeks to terrify or mock men. We learn from Ps. 78:49 that in the fierceness of His anger God cast trouble upon the Egyptians by sending evil angels among them. 1 Cor. 10:20 declares that at the idolatrous feasts of the pagans the devils are the real hosts. However, let us state once more: Caution is necessary in passing judgment on such occur-

rences; for it is certain that visions may come from God or from good angels or from natural causes which we have not yet learned to understand. This applies to the specter which so frightened Eliphaz. (Job 4:12-19)

This is a subject on which there rests a veil of deep mystery, because God has not given us much instruction on it. It is difficult for us to determine how far the realm of human power extends and where the sphere which we term supernatural begins. That the human soul, with its many faculties, has not yet been fully explored will be granted without debate. There is an occult field suggested by words like hypnotism, somnambulism, clairvoyance, Ouija board, etc., which still lies within the confines of the natural, but concerning which we know little and tampering with which may prove harmful. Recognizing the existence of powers of the human mind which are still partially or entirely hidden from us, we must nevertheless say that there are phenomena which cannot be traced back to them. There are some things transcending our knowledge and defying natural explanations, and the only adequate explanation is the power of the prince of darkness.

Concerning witchcraft and spiritism Luther writes: "You can readily see that if any spirits try to commune with us about the condition and circumstances of the dead, they cannot be good spirits. A good spirit is obedient to God and His command, and God does not want us to communicate with the dead. That explains why the Holy Ghost Himself observes this decree of God so carefully that there is no instance of the dead manifesting themselves to the living in the entire Scripture; in fact, the Bible forbids us to believe such spirits. As for the raising of Samuel, 1 Sam. 28:11, 12, by means of a fortuneteller or witch, this was certainly an apparition of the devil, not only because Scripture tells us that it was brought about by a woman who was full of devils, but also because Saul and the woman openly disobeyed the divine command and consulted and inquired of the dead. As though one should believe that the souls of the saints, which are in the hands of God and in the bosom of Abraham, are under the jurisdiction of the devil and of evil people! The fact that the Scriptures do not expressly state whether it was Samuel or not, yes, even call him Samuel, is because the Scripture describes what was in Saul's heart. He did not know but that it was Samuel; and the spirit

cleverly used Samuel's mode of speaking. Therefore, 'when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their God?' Is. 8:19." (XIX, 1139, 1140)

"Because we are Christians, we should know the devil's designs and believe that spooks and apparitions are nothing but devils and not human souls. They pretend and say that one could ransom them from purgatory in order to make a mockery out of the Holy Sacrament of God, quench the faith, and establish and confirm the disgraceful money-making scheme of the Mass. Try it! Show your faith, and you will see that those 'ghosts' from that hour will cease their spookery and foolishness" (XIX, 1139). "Other vices are promoted by a special devil or by a gang of devils, but I judge that the sacrifice of the Mass is a community project of all devils. They pooled all their resources, all their know-how, all their malice, all their deception, to inaugurate this abomination and to preserve it. This is clear because the apparitions everywhere, pretending they are souls of the departed, beg for Masses. That is a strong proof that the devils nowhere are so lively as in those who read or serve Mass" (XVI, 1655). In this connection, Luther tells of an instance where a young child had died. The father had ceased to believe in purgatory and therefore did not pay for any Masses for the dead. One night at 8:00 o'clock the members of the family heard the sound of a crying child in the bedroom, and this sound was repeated every evening at the same hour. The priests heard of it and exclaimed, "The poor little soul! There you can see what happens when one neglects having Masses said." Luther advised the father to treat the devil, who was imitating the crying of a child, with contempt and indifference. Thereupon the crying ceased. Instead there was a great racket and commotion. Objects were tossed about and the bed covers were snatched from people who had retired. On one occasion it frightened a guest nearly out of his wits. Finally, when the spook began to cause a rumpus in an adjoining room, a brave woman exposed her fundament, broke wind, and said, "Look, devil, use that for a walking cane and make a pilgrimage to Rome and your false god, the pope, and get an indulgence from him." After that the devil and his intolerable racket were no longer heard. "For he is a proud spirit and cannot stomach contempt." (XXII, 730, 731)

“Regarding madmen and the insane, all idiots, and others who do not have the use of their mind, it is my opinion that they are plagued or possessed by the devil. That does not mean that they are lost and damned on that account, but that the very devil tempts and abuses mankind in so many ways, some more, others less. Speaking of the woman who was bent over and couldn’t fully straighten herself, Jesus said (Luke 13:16): ‘Satan hath bound this woman, lo, these eighteen years.’ And Peter testifies (Acts 10:38) that Jesus of Nazareth ‘went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.’” Luther: “All whom Jesus healed were oppressed by the devil.” (X, 1543)

Even if it were possible to consult the dead, it would serve no useful purpose. The most earnest warnings of a soul in torment would not change a person’s character or work the saving faith in him. Nor would it deter him from sin. In olden times victims were tortured most horribly in public, and yet the crimes for which they were quartered or burned or mutilated continued as before. And as for consulting souls in bliss, a Christian has the clear Word of salvation and does not need any miracles to confirm it. As our Savior said: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. . . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” The devils attack the bodies of men, as can be seen from the story of the infirm woman (Luke 13:11, 16), and also of Job. They attack the temporal possessions of men as in the instance of Job. They attack the souls of men. Christ warns His disciples (Luke 22:31) that Satan had desired to sift them like wheat; that is, he sought to confuse and disturb their minds, shake their faith, and if possible, cause them to forsake their faith in Jesus on account of the offense they would take at His Passion. Paul warns the Christians (Eph. 6:11, 12) that the devil strives by all manner of insults and assaults to cause the Christians to lose their souls. And the violent rage which 1 Peter 5:8, 9 ascribes to the devil, who walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, is directed chiefly at the destruction of the souls of the believers, because Peter suggests that to resist him we should resort to faith and prayer.

The state of unbelief in which many men live is the work of the devil (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). When this becomes greatly aggravated, it is called diabolical obsession. We distinguish between

obsession of the mind and the possession of the body. A flagrant example of the obsession of the mind is Judas Iscariot. The suggestion to betray Christ had come to him from the devil (John 13:2), and Judas acted upon it (Luke 22:3, 4), showing that he had yielded his mind to the domination of Satan. "Satan entered into Judas" (John 13:27); that is, he spiritually obsessed Judas, driving him with increasing force to commit his wicked deed.

When we read or hear of the commission of some atrocious crime, we become aware of the extraordinary power which Satan wields over some men. We know what atrocities were committed by Hitler and his henchmen in the German concentration camps, and we have also had sufficient information on the horrors which the equally godless communists have inflicted upon their prisoners as well as upon their own people. Lest we think that here in America such things could not happen, I might cite a number of instances which have occurred during the past months, as reported in the newspapers. There is the account of a woman who poured a bucket of boiling water upon the face and chest of her sleeping son-in-law. Three days later he died in the utmost agony. There is an account of a young mother whose baby was sick and fretful. She picked him up by the heels and dashed his head against the floor and brought on a concussion from which he died. Recently the papers carried an account of a criminal in New York who raped and tortured and stabbed to death a number of very young victims. Instances of such sadistic and satanic cruelty could be multiplied without end. Since Satan is able to disguise himself as an angel of light, we are able to explain the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, in which hundreds of thousands of innocent victims were tortured to death in the most horrible manner by direction of the Roman Church, which claimed that this was being done for the glory of God. John the Baptist called the Pharisees a brood of vipers because of their venomous spirit and malice (Matt. 3:7). Our Lord tells these same people (John 8:44) that they are the devil's brood; not indeed by physical generation, but because they imitated the devil. In spiritual obsession the mind of the obsessed co-operates consciously and willingly with the devil. Therefore spiritual obsession does not make a person irresponsible. Although the prompting of Satan is ever present in the minds of the obsessed, they themselves delight in obeying his impulses. Spiritual obses-

sion is not so horrible to behold as corporal possession, but it is a far greater and more disastrous occurrence.

As instances of bodily possession, the cases of the demoniacs whom our Lord exorcised are usually cited (Matt. 8:28, 31, 32; Mark 7:25ff.; Luke 4:35, 36). The devil is said to be present in these unfortunate victims in his own person. The manner in which our Lord and the apostles speak of and to the demoniacs indicates that the devil had taken possession of the bodies of these men, either entirely or partially, by afflicting some member of the body. Even true believers may become thus possessed, as witness Paul, 2 Cor. 12:7, who speaks of Satan's messenger, "angel," buffeting him, and Job 1 and 2. When a person is bodily, physically possessed, he is not responsible for anything that he does. We must take great care not to view every case of insanity and epilepsy as demoniac possession. Quenstedt cites the following signs of demoniac possession: One: sudden knowledge of foreign languages or of accomplishments and skills which the possessed has not acquired by study and practice and which he does not remember when restored to a sane condition. Two: knowledge of hidden articles or of coming events. Three: unnatural and superhuman physical strength. Four: the ability of reproducing the cries of birds and beasts exactly, without their vocal organs. Five: foul speech. Six: coarse gestures. Seven: bellowing voice. Eight: blasphemy and gross slander. Nine: savage cruelty against one's body or against others. However, the concluding remark of Quenstedt deserves to be heeded: "We must be very careful in every individual case that we do not say that those who are suffering merely from a serious illness are afflicted by the devil."

In the days of Christ there were many people that were thus possessed of the devil. There still are cases of demoniac possession today, although they are very rare. Apparently such manifestations of the devil are most numerous during times of great religious revivals. Many instances of this nature are recorded in the history of the Reformation, and some of the fathers of our District and Synod had similar experiences.

It would lead us too far from our outline if we study all the sayings of Satan that are recorded in Scripture. We should, however, take notice of the fact that the father of lies sometimes tells the truth. This is not a contradiction of Scripture, because the

Bible does not say that he always and in every instance speaks a lie. As examples of truthfulness on the part of the devil we quote Mark 5:7: "The unclean spirit (v. 8) cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not." Mark 1:24: "Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God." Matt. 8:29: "Art Thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*" In the *Harmonia Biblica* Michael Walther says of such words of Satan: "When the wily and crafty spirit here tells the truth, he has something else in mind than to laud and praise God. He wanted human beings to believe, when they heard the devil call Christ the Son of God, that this could not be true, since the devil is known to be a liar. He does not want to lead men into the truth even when he speaks the truth."

Is it correct to say that all temporal ills and adversities in this world are the work of the devil? Doesn't God Himself say (Jer. 11:11): "Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape, and though they shall cry unto Me, I will not hearken unto them"? And Amos 3:6: "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?" In reply we would say that nothing is done without the will of God. In everything that happens God is either personally active, or He permits it to happen. If He wants some evil to befall individuals or groups of people, He permits the devil to have power temporarily to bring about this evil. When such terrible calamities happen, we must think of God as the One who willed it thus, and the devil as the one who is the instrument to carry it out. We must not, however, assume that in every individual case where some calamity or plague comes upon mankind, the devil is always the author. God Himself sometimes punishes people directly. We may establish it as a rule that the devil is an instrument of God to bring about punishment, but we cannot differentiate too exactly. There are some natural phenomena, such as storms, earthquakes, and similar things, by which God punishes mankind, and we must always remember that God has all things in His hand and that all punishment, all plagues, are occurring only because He permits them to occur. God sometimes uses good angels to carry out punishment, as we shall hear.

It was for the purpose of destroying the kingdom of Satan that Jesus came into the world. We read 1 John 3:8: "For this purpose

the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." As one of us, as a human being, He had to take up the fight with Satan which Adam and Eve had lost. That was the purpose and the reason why He became a human being. Heb. 2:14: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." The entire life of our Savior on earth was an uninterrupted warfare with Satan. What Satan had won from the first Adam, he had to lose again to the second Adam, our Substitute, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:47). This warfare reached its climax on the cross of Golgotha. That was Satan's great hour, in which he, through his instruments, the mad Jews, sought to destroy the Savior of the world. Jesus Himself had said (Luke 22:53): "This is your hour and the power of darkness." But Satan was nevertheless completely mistaken; it was not his great hour, but was the great hour of Jesus Himself. He had, shortly before His voluntary suffering and death, announced this hour when He said (John 12:31): "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." For our Savior's unique death was the ransom for lost and condemned mankind. Satan, by bringing about this death through God's wonderful providence, thus had to be instrumental in destroying his own kingdom. The risen Savior "hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." (Col. 2:15)

At the end of the world, during the persecution of the Antichrist, the malice of men will give these devils a more extended empire, which, however, shall last only a short time. Christ will scatter their forces and hurl them into hell, while He will lead His saints in triumph to heaven, where they will reign with Him to eternity. (Rev. 20:1-3, 9; 2 Thess. 2:8-10)

What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,
Christ is your Brother; ye are safe. *L. H.*, 103:4

Why is it that the devil can still hurt and harm us when Scripture assures us that Jesus has bruised his head and that one little

word can fell him? In reply we may state that the devil can never under any circumstances force a person into sin. He operates entirely by means of suggestions and enticements and temptations. If we ask how an evil foe who has been thoroughly overcome, and over whom Christ has obtained the victory, can still even as much as seduce us or tempt us, then for an answer we relate an incident which happened some twenty-five years ago in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. A woman whose husband was a notorious and abusive drunkard had gone to the wood lot late in the afternoon, and while there, she had killed a huge rattlesnake by chopping off its head with an axe. After dark her husband came home, and when he did not find his meal ready and waiting for him, he knocked his wife unconscious in a fit of rage and then went out in his bare feet in order to get some wood. When the woman recovered the next morning, she missed her husband, but did not begin to look for him immediately, since it was his habit to be gone much of the time. Later in the day, when she went out to get some wood to prepare a meal, she found him unconscious, with the severed head of the rattlesnake attached to one of his feet and the poison fangs driven in deeply. Evidently her husband had stepped into the open head of the rattlesnake and thus had been infected with the poison that was still in a fluid and viable condition. Medical help came too late to save his life. We here have an instance where a dead snake killed a man; similarly the devil, who is by no means dead, but who has only been rendered impotent by the power of Christ, can still harm us if we deliberately place ourselves in his power.

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). God promises that in our warfare with the devil we shall obtain the victory. With our own might we can effect nothing, but by our side stands the almighty God, the great Savior. He has put the weapon in our hands against which Satan is helpless. This weapon is the Word of God, the holy Gospel. “Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:16, 17). The devil cannot harm a Christian who believes the Gospel. The Gospel gives us great courage. It assures us that our Savior has atoned for all our sins. We know that God has nothing against us. In the power

of this certainty we can tread Satan with his contrary lies under our feet.

The devil is a crafty being who knows how to exploit human frailty. His raving and roaring can fill the ignorant ones with terror. But if we resist him steadfastly in the faith, "He can harm us none, He's judged; the deed is done." He can open wide his mouth, but he cannot devour me. He can besiege my heart, but he cannot conquer it. Though the waters of the sea roar and be troubled, though the mountains tremble with its tumult, the sea is confined to its basin, and the devil and his angels are equally restrained. A roaring lion can be kept away by a roaring fire. So the devil can be kept from harming us by the bright light of God's Word. Thus Luther and others taught Christianity to sing:

God the Father, be our Stay;
Oh, let us perish never!
Cleanse us from our sins, we pray,
And grant us life forever.
Keep us from the Evil One,
Uphold our faith most holy,
Grant us to trust Thee solely
With humble hearts and lowly.
Let us put God's armor on,
With all true Christians running
Our heavenly race and shunning
The devil's wiles and cunning.
Amen, Amen, this be done;
So sing we, Hallelujah! Amen. *L. H.*, 247:1

Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the Tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with Him one bitter hour,
Turn not from His griefs away,
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray. *L. H.*, 159:1

For Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

O God, forsake me not!
Lord, hear my supplication!
In every evil hour
Help me o'ercome temptation.
And when the prince of hell
My conscience seeks to blot,
Be Thou not far from me.

O God, forsake me not! *L. H.*, 402:3

When we think of the dreadful judgment of God over the wicked angels, let us be filled with love and joyous gratitude toward God for His great grace. He has helped us; He made us His children and heirs of eternal life. We owe this entirely to His grace in Christ Jesus. We should be humbled by this thought and praise God forever for His goodness toward us. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 15:57)

III. THE GOOD ANGELS

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." At night, when we gaze at the heavens studded with stars great and glorious and beautiful, we are reminded that Scripture has opened to our spiritual view a vista of the blessed holy angels, who are even more majestic and glorious and beautiful. They shine as the stars around us, but unlike the stars they are not disinterested spectators in their silent watches. They are ministering spirits, sent by God as evidences of His presence. He has revealed to us their deep concern for our welfare, their active ministrations about us day and night, and especially their regard for those who are of a devout faith and a meek spirit:

They are evermore around us,
Though unseen to mortal sight,
In the golden hour of sunshine
And in sorrow's starless night;
Seeing all our guilt and weakness,
Looking down with piteous eyes,
For the foolish things we cling to
And the heaven that we despise;
They have been our guardian angels
Since the weary world began,
And they still are watching o'er us,
For His sake who died for man.

During their period of probation they had rendered constant obedience to God. When the evil angels revolted, they remained firm in their allegiance. God filled these faithful and constant spirits with the light of heavenly glory and admitted them to the vision of Himself (Matt. 18:10). This highest privilege that any creature can obtain, this climax of the blissful life of eternity, was accompanied by the most intense adoration, so that these angels cling inseparably to God as the supreme object of their affection.

They became confirmed in goodness. Their will was unchangeably determined to act only in agreement with the will of God. It was henceforth impossible for them to sin, for they always behold God. As a consequence they had also become immune to death (Luke 20:36). When our Lord shall return for the Last Judgment, they will form His glorious retinue and witness His righteous judgments.

The confirmation of the angels in their blessed state took place in accordance with divine election. This is indicated by their designation as the "elect angels" (1 Tim. 5:21). It is not easy to describe this election or predestination of the angels to a life of glory. We cannot attribute it to an absolute decree of God by which some of them were predestinated to heaven while the others were rejected. For this is not compatible with the uniform goodness and grace of God toward all His creatures. Nor can the election of the angels be embraced in the election of the believers. The believers have a Savior, who assumed their flesh and blood but took not on Himself the nature of angels (Heb. 2:16). The angels were not redeemed by Christ, because they were not in need of redemption.

Matt. 25:31 we are told that all the holy angels will accompany Jesus. To be holy means to be free from sin. Sometimes human beings are called holy because through Christ they have, by faith, forgiveness of all their sins. But the angels are holy in themselves, that is, they never did anything wrong, never had any wrong clinging to them, but they remained in their original holiness. As holy beings they not only have not sinned, but they also hate sin in others and love that which is good. We can see this from Luke 15:10, where Jesus says that there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner that repents. The angels are saddened by the wickedness of an unrepentant sinner, but they are very happy when a sinner becomes repentant. From John 8:44 we note that before the fall of the evil angels they, too, were abiding in the truth. We know, furthermore, that the good angels have been confirmed in their bliss and holiness. They are in such a condition that they cannot lose their concreated holiness. This is established by Matt. 18:10, where Jesus says of the guardian angels of little children that they always behold the face of His Father in heaven. To see the face of God in heaven means that they have the highest of all joys and pleasures. Since the angels always do this, we have proof that they are always in bliss. Scripture does not tell us when

this confirmation took place. We assume that after a portion of the angels had fallen into sin, God according to His good pleasure filled those angels who remained faithful to Him with the light of glory so that it is no longer possible that they could fall away from Him. The statements in Eph. 1:10 that in the "fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth," and in Col. 1:19, 20: "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself . . . whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," do not mean that angels share in the redemption accomplished for men, but that, as an effect of our redemption, the element of sin, which separated men also from the angels, has been removed. The angels rejoice with the redeemed sinners over the redemption of the latter. Some of the Reformed theologians and the papists have applied the entire way of salvation appointed for men (repentance, faith, means of grace) also to the angels.

Theologians are unable to solve the mystery of why some human beings are saved whereas others are lost. We face an equal mystery when we ponder the question why some of the angels retained their happiness and others failed. God does not force such happiness on His creatures. He seeks their choice by testing their loyalty. When they were first created, all the angels were tried, and the outcome determined whether they were to spend eternity happily associated with God or separated from and opposed to Him. Some disregarded His good and gracious will and with proud thoughts of independence chose to part company with God, but the majority cast their lot with their Maker. The result is the devils of hell and the angels of heaven. All are angels, but some are faithful, some fallen.

All the angels had an equal chance; they were created sinless with the opportunity of obtaining life in heaven, the liberty of the sons of God, and the happiness that was their divinely appointed goal. Their fall came when some deliberately chose the place that came to be called hell, for it was then that the punishments of hell were first prepared. In their determination to be separated from God, they became fixed in their opposition to Him and all His plans, including His plans for us. Hence they strive to separate man from God with all the efforts that God permits them to exert.

By their loyal obedience the angels of heaven deserve to be familiarly associated with their Maker and to secure forever their share of eternal life and happiness. In heaven they joyfully take part in God's plan to lead each and every one of us to the same happy state by acting as His messengers to men and serving as our guardians.

Hark, the glad celestial hymn
Angel choirs above are raising;
Cherubim and seraphim,
In unceasing chorus praising,
Fill the heavens with sweet accord:
Holy, holy, holy, Lord! *L. H.*, 250:2

Our study of the good angels necessarily includes a reference to those remarkable beings, the cherubim and seraphim. Theodoret, a bishop of the fifth century; Andreas Musculus, a contemporary of Luther; and others believed that the cherubim were horrible monsters placed before the gates of Paradise in order to frighten human beings. Manasseh ben Israel considered them to be hellish tormentors. These are unfounded suppositions. Nowhere in Holy Scripture is a cherub described as an ugly apparition or as an evil angel. It is not reasonable to believe that God would trust the devil with the protection and guardianship of Paradise, when he was the one who caused our first parents to be expelled from Paradise. Regarding the appearance or manifestation of the cherubim we know only this, that they are described in various ways in Holy Scripture, so that it is impossible to form a mental picture of them. God ordered golden images of two cherubim to be placed on the mercy seat over the Ark of the Covenant. They had only one face and two wings. In all probability they symbolized the presence of God, whose glory was manifested in the space between them (Lev. 16:2). Many references are made to the fact that God dwells between or above the cherubim. God also demanded that representations of these beings be embroidered on the hangings of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1). Solomon placed two wooden cherubim, overlaid with gold, in the temple (1 Kings 6:23-28). David represented God as riding upon a flying cherub (Ps. 18:10). Ezekiel describes a vision of cherubim by the river Chebar in Babylonia. Unlike the ones described by Moses, these had four faces and four wings each. The faces were those of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. They bore the throne of God. Since John describes similar four-

faced beings in the Apocalypse, he is in all probability also referring to these creatures.

Modernistic scholars think that the cherubim symbolize storm clouds and other violent manifestations of the forces of nature. But all the facts indicate an order of angels. Apparently there are only four of these cherubim (Rev. 4:6, 8). The two seraphim, so abruptly introduced in Isaiah 6 and never again mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, are evidently synonymous with them.

Just as Luke mingles what Jesus had to say about the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world until it is difficult to say which statements apply to the one or to the other, so also the lamentation of Ezekiel over the king of Tyre seems to include a comparison between him and the fall of Satan (who originally had been a cherub). "Thus saith the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold; the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:12-15). "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Is. 14:12-15)

We are all familiar with Luther's majestic "Sanctus," based on Is. 6:1-4. He arranged the text and composed the tune which is inseparably connected with it, in 1526 (No. 249 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*). Luther's thoughts concerning the cherubim are found in Vol. I, 288: "I want to express my opinion about what I have been able to read and comprehend regarding the cherubim. I be-

lieve that 'cherub' denotes a full, blooming, handsome countenance, such as one sees in young girls and boys in their early youth. Accordingly, cherubim are angels who manifest themselves, not with a wrinkled and sour face, but with a happy bearing and full face, be it human or otherwise. It is a word that applies to the entire species and therefore cannot mean a separate choir or order of angels, as Dionysius dreams, but applies to the semblance by which the angels manifest themselves to men. The Hebrews share this view when they say that Kerub is a Chaldean word, 'Ke' being a prefix and 'rub' meaning a handsome young fellow with a full and blooming countenance; and that angels are called cherubim because they manifest themselves in the form of those who are young, happy, and good-looking, just as artists picture them. Seraphim is also a generic term and means angels of fire or brightness, because their appearance is as the text indicates (Num. 21:6): 'And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people.' From this we understand that the angels are not only handsome and full-faced, as the cherubim, but that they also shine brightly. Thus they are pictured in the Gospel, for Matt. 28:3 says of the angel that sat by the sepulcher of the Lord: 'His countenance was like lightning.' Here we may also quote Ps. 104:4: 'Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire,' that is, a shimmering, shining fire. Luke 2:9 we read that the angel came to the shepherds and 'the glory of the Lord shone round about them.'"

H. C. Leupold expresses the following opinion in his *Exposition of Genesis*: "Between man and the garden 'cherubim' are placed. They are a type of being somewhat like angels. Because they are elsewhere in the Scriptures definitely described as 'the living ones,' we are well justified in claiming that because of this distinctive name they must represent the highest type of living beings. They are particularly found in the Scriptures as honored by the privilege to stand in the immediate presence of the heavenly King, and they are especially associated with Him in works of judgment. Koenig's *Woerterbuch* well defines that they are 'representatives and mediators of God's presence in the world' (Ps. 18:10). The root from which the word may be derived would suggest that the word as such means 'a brilliant appearance.' How these marvelous beings appeared was well remembered by the Israelites at least, for they

seemed to require no further description when they were told to make two cherubim upon the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant and otherwise to use the figures of cherubim for ornamental purposes; cf. Ex. 25:18; 26:1."

The *good angels* preserved in obedience and secured the crown; they are faithful to God, humble and obedient, and thus deserve the crown of everlasting glory. Just as the devils are always in hell, even while they roam to and fro in the world, so the good angels are always in heaven, in the presence of God, even while they serve Him on earth. They see, adore, and bless Him, and are inseparably attached to Him for eternity. (Dan. 7:10; Rev. 5:11; Is. 6:2, 3; Matt. 18:10)

Angels are not members of the Church Militant; if they were, they would be partakers of the privileges of membership in the church, of the use of the sacraments, and of the power of the Word. They would be entitled to forgiveness of sins, to the use of the office of the ministry, etc. Manifestly this is utterly unnecessary, for angels are already in heaven and confirmed in holiness. But they are part of the Church Triumphant, even as the souls of the saints which have been translated from this world are part of the Church Triumphant. We sing in the hymn: "The saints on earth and those above but one communion make."

Our outline cites Ps. 8:5 as proof that angels are a higher order of creatures than man. A check with the original Hebrew shows that this passage, translated literally, should read, "and caustest him to lack a little of Godhead." (The RSV: "Thou hast made him a little less than God.") But in Heb. 2:6, 7 this passage is applied to the angels; therefore it is a valid proof-text for the superiority of angels over men. Peter speaks of the arrogance of those who "are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord." (2 Peter 2:10, 11)

Dan. 7:10 says, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." The similar passage in Rev. 5:11 reads: "I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The

expression "thousands of thousands and ten thousand times ten thousand" is not to indicate an exact number, but only a round figure in order to show that we must count angels by the thousands and by the millions. Matt. 26:53 the Lord Jesus says: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" A legion among the Romans was an army division of 6,000 men, so here is another reference to the great number of angels. Finally, we read in Heb. 12:22 of "an innumerable company of angels," and in Gen. 32:1, 2: "The angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host." These and similar passages indicate how numerous the angels must be. This is a most comforting truth for us when we remember that we are surrounded daily and hourly by such a great host of powerful friends. How safe and sure we should feel when we go about in the ways of our calling, since the angels of the Lord, like a host, are camped round about us!

This "innumerable company of angels" constitutes the armies of heaven. In speaking of the coming of Christ, John says: "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him [Jesus] upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Rev. 19:14). In all probability the Michael mentioned in Rev. 12:7 is a reference to Christ: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and His angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not." Old Testament references to the number of angels include such passages as Ps. 68:17, where we are told that "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands." Add to this what we read in 2 Kings 6:17: "Behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

According to the testimony of Holy Scripture the good angels are also wise spirits. Commonly the passage 2 Sam. 14:20 is quoted here: "My lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth." This passage has always been adduced as proof for the wisdom of angels, but we have not here an expression of God Himself, but an expression of the wise woman of Tekoah. This woman believed that angels were very wise, and this was the belief also of the people of Israel at that time. Holy Scripture merely reports that this was her opinion, but makes no comment on its correctness. Since human beings are

quoted in Holy Scripture with opinions which are palpably false, as, for instance, the opinions and expressions of the friends of Job, we cannot be too sure that we can place complete reliance upon what this wise woman of Tekoah said about the wisdom of the angels. Holy Scripture does not dispute her statement, but it also does not endorse it. There is indeed no Scripture passage which specifically ascribes wisdom to the angels, but there are texts from which we can surmise as much. That the angels are wise can be proved, for instance, by the fact that the greatest wisdom is to know God. The angels proved that they have this knowledge when they praised God and rejoiced over His great works during the creation of the world, at the birth of Jesus, at His resurrection, and at His ascension into heaven. Since our knowledge of God in this present life is an imperfect one and since we will only then have reached the greatest degree of wisdom when we see God face to face in heaven, the angels must be very wise indeed, because they always behold the face of our Father in heaven (Matt. 18:10). Furthermore, if the angels are holy spirits, they are also wise spirits, for those two qualifications are closely united; there is no true holiness without true wisdom. Also the things that they do, prove that they have much knowledge; for not only do the angels guard and protect individual people, but also entire nations, yes, the whole church of God throughout all the centuries until Judgment Day, and to do this requires profound wisdom. Through His angels God does great and wonderful things. By their means He carries out His judgment against people and against nations, and by their means someday He will also carry out the great work of judging the world. For these assignments great wisdom indeed is needed, wisdom much greater than that which human beings possess.

But the angels are not omniscient. They do not know the thoughts and motives of every individual human being. This is a prerogative of the all-knowing God, who is "a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12, 13). But angels have had the experience of some six thousand years of observing us, and they can estimate our thoughts from our gestures and expressions and from our known reactions to outward stimuli. Also, God often

reveals such things to them. (Dan. 8:16; 9:22, angels instructing Daniel)

The angels are powerful and mighty spirits. They can do anything which is suitable to their natures and their ways. Ps. 103:20: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength." 2 Thess. 1:7: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels." In both of these prooftexts the angels are mentioned in such a way that it leaves no doubt at all that they are powerful beings. At various times the angels have proved their greatness and power by mighty deeds. In 2 Kings 19:35 we read that in one night one angel slew 185,000 men in the camp of the Assyrians. Dan. 3:27 tells us that an angel of the Lord had such power over fire that the three men in the fiery furnace did not even have one hair of their head singed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them. Daniel 6 describes how an angel kept ravening lions from devouring Daniel. In John 5:4 we are told that one angel by means of stirring up the water in the pool of Bethesda was able to heal anybody, "of whatsoever disease he had."

This power which the angels have is, however, not an almighty one, but it has its limits. God alone is almighty. Heb. 1:13, 14: "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" The angels carry out God's commands, that is, when they do something which requires great strength and power, God is the one that tells them what to do and supplies them with the ability to carry out His orders. Peter says of them (2 Peter 2:11) that they have greater power and might than human beings have. Luther said in one of his Easter sermons that one angel is more powerful than the whole world. We cannot tell how angels, who are spirits, can affect material things.

Angels are represented by artists as beautiful human figures with wings, to convey the idea of their heavenly goodness and to show the swiftness with which they carry out God's wishes. They have no bodies, but they have personality nevertheless. They refer to themselves as persons ("I am Gabriel") and are addressed as such by their name (Dan. 8:16): "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." Only two angels are mentioned by name in Holy Scripture.

1. *Gabriel* ("Power of God" or "Hero of God") — He was God's messenger to Daniel (8:16; 9:21) and to Zacharias and to Mary (Luke 1). According to Jewish legends it was he who destroyed Sodom. He struck the servant of the Egyptian princess because she tried to keep her mistress from taking Moses out of the water; and he struck Moses so that he might cry and thus awaken pity. He delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and slew those who were feeding the fire; he is also the one who smote Sennacherib's army (2 Kings 19). He is made of *fire*. One of his duties is to bring fruit to maturity.

2. *Michael* ("Who is like God?") — Dan. 10:13; 12:1; Jude 9, where we are told that his modesty prevented him from personally condemning Satan. (The reference to Michael and his angels in Rev. 12:7, 8 may apply to the Angel of the Lord, Jesus Christ.) The Jews attributed great wisdom to the angel Michael. He was considered to be Israel's guardian angel; he was the principal of the three angels who came to Abraham to announce the birth of Isaac, Gabriel being at his right and Raphael at his left. He and Gabriel were groomsmen at Adam's wedding. Michael prepared Moses' bier at his death. He can fly eight times as fast as the angel of death, in order to warn people and thus give them time for repentance. He is made of *snow*, yet Gabriel and he are nearly always together without causing each other harm.

In the apocryphal books of Esdras and Tobit and in the Jewish Talmud we find other names for angels: Uriel (Angel of Light); Phanuel; Yophiel; Nabel (angel of poverty); Jeremiel; Raphael (angel of healing); Yophyophyel; Liolahel (angel of dreams); Azrael (angel of death). The Arabs say he is blind. When an Arab dies, Azrael seizes him by a lock of hair (pigtail) left for that purpose behind one ear, and by its means draws him into Paradise.

The Bible contains many familiar accounts of the help and protection afforded by the angels. One angel brought food to Elijah, in the strength of which he traveled forty days and forty nights while fleeing from Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 19:5-8). Angels protected Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19:12-17); Elisha in Dothan; Peter in prison. But we are not limited to the Bible to illustrate the precious

truth that God provides us with ministering angels. There are many recent instances of their love and help.

My sainted father was the pastor of a congregation in western Nebraska near Fort Kearney. It became necessary for him to take a firm stand against an utterly depraved man. Chiefly because of the testimony of my father, this man was convicted and sentenced to several years of hard labor. This criminal is the only person that I ever personally saw wear a ball and chain. He was filled with bitter, vindictive hatred against my father and vowed that he would kill him. On one occasion after the man's release my father was walking the streets of Fort Kearney late one night, and when he approached a certain alley, he heard footsteps all around him. He looked in every direction; there was enough light that he could see quite well, but he could see no people at all. When he would stop, there was no sound. When he moved forward, he again could hear these footsteps all about him. In his apprehension he prayed to the Lord for protection against any evil that might threaten to harm him. But the footsteps kept right on. Finally, as father crossed an alley, the ex-convict sprang at him, brandishing a club. But before he could take more than a step, an expression of utter fright came upon his face. He dropped the club and ran down the alley, screaming, and my father never saw him again. After he had crossed the alley, the footsteps ceased, and he never heard them any more. He always believed and used to tell us children that he was convinced that the Lord had sent a guard of angels, invisible to him, but visible to the would-be assassin, that protected him on that night. I have heard of similar occurrences in the lives of some of our founding fathers. There are true experiences of this nature recorded by Alfred Ira and others. We cannot see, because of the imperfection of mortal vision, the armed squadrons of celestial fire and light. But "the Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." If our eyes were open, we should see the angel host as an encircling fence of fire. But whether we see them or not, they are certainly there.

I am convinced that no thinking and believing Christian who has reared a family of children can doubt the existence of a guardian angel. In the life of every person a number of instances are

sure to occur where, according to all our experiences, he should have been horribly hurt, or perhaps killed; and yet in some miraculous manner no harm befell him. I know of two children who, upon different occasions, fell from a considerable height on solid concrete and were in no wise injured. I myself, during the sixth year of my life, was knocked down and trampled by a runaway horse. For many years I bore the imprint of a horseshoe on my chest, and some of the nail marks still show after over fifty years. Yet not one rib was even cracked or broken. We could multiply instances of a similar nature almost without end. This is especially true of the experience of soldiers in battle. Yes, there most certainly is a guardian angel for God's children.

Jesus, Brightness of the Father,
Life and Strength of all who live,
For creating guardian angels
Glory to Thy name we give. *L. H.*, 257:1

Guardian spirits may be compared to the bodyguard of a ruler. As soldiers watch lest harm befall their king, so the angels watch over God's people. Those who fear God have the least reason to fear any enemy, for the angels protect them. He who fears God need fear nothing else. This bodyguard of the Christian can be depended upon. The angels not only keep watch, but actually deliver their wards from harm. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" It is the business of the good angels to minister, to serve, to help. St. Jerome writes: "Indeed a great honor, that each soul from the moment of birth has a guardian angel assigned to us by the Lord; he corrects us, admonishes us, guides us; he wants to improve us in all our actions, and he wants to help us to obtain God's grace and mercy. Daily he beholds the face of our Father in heaven." Luther expresses this conviction: "Every Christian has not one but many angels who protect him, just as everyone also has special devils that sneak after him and, if they can't do anything else, they will send him bad dreams or turn wicked tongues loose to lie about him and destroy his good name" (XIII, 2776). "It is certain that a newborn baby has its own angel, who is much greater and more powerful than the king of France or the emperor in Rome. These angels protect and guard us so that the devil cannot harm us. For that is also true, that wherever we may

be, a large number of devils always spy upon us in order to find opportunities to frighten us and harm us." (XIII, 2784)

The ancient dragon is their foe;
His envy and his wrath they know.
It always is his aim and pride
Thy Christian people to divide.

But watchful is the angel band
That follows Christ on every hand
To guard His people where they go
And break the counsel of the Foe. *L. H.*, 254:4, 7

Ah, how often doth the devil
Cause some great calamity!
But my life from all such evil
Till this moment has been free.
For the angel whom God sendeth
Wardeth off each threatening hurt,
Every evil doth avert
That mine enemy intendeth. *Ev. Luth. H.-B.*, 65:8

Let not Thine angel leave me
While here on earth I stay,
Lest Satan's arts deceive me
And lead my soul astray.
Then keep Thine angel near
At night and each new morrow,
Lest soul and body sorrow
And faltering cost me dear. *L. H.*, 548:4

Keep Satan's fury far from me
By many an angel arm;
Then shall I be from worry free
And safe from every harm. *L. H.*, 561:4

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
Oh, spread Thy wings above me,
And shield me from alarm!
Though Satan would devour me,
Let angel-guards sing o'er me:
"This child of God shall meet no harm."

Ev. Luth. H.-B., 33:8

We not only have guardian angels, but the Bible also speaks of recording angels. They keep a record of all actions and words, however secret they may seem to us. *Eccl. 5:4-6*: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it. . . . Better is it that

thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. . . . Neither say thou before the angel that it was an error." Invisibly the recording angel is present when we make a solemn vow, such as at our baptism, confirmation, or marriage. These angels are also witnesses to our wrongdoings. Especially will they note the flimsy excuses with which we try to placate our conscience, even before God's appointed witnesses. Eccl. 10:20: "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." This is a solemn reminder that God wants us to respect high office and authority as such, even if those who occupy such an office are of questionable moral character. Every ordinance of God may become corrupted by vice, but the fact still remains: "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). By strange and unaccountable ways, which no one would consider possible, what we say in the privacy of our house will be revealed. Since birds obviously cannot be the bearers of such tales, we may consider this a reference to winged recording angels, who expose our wrongdoing as a punishment.

Daniel 4:13-17: "A watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; he cried aloud and said thus [of Nebuchadnezzar]: . . . Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him. . . . This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones; to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." Doubtless a certain, definite angel was meant, called a "watcher" because of his sleepless nature and a "holy one" in contrast to the wicked angels who also watch us, or rather, spy upon us. We believe according to God's holy Word that angels do not determine the fate of men. But the angels are in the presence of God. They make known His decrees to mankind. This passage may be in the nature of a petition which the recording angels intended to submit to God with the firm assurance that it would meet with His approval. For God resisteth the proud, such as Nebuchadnezzar, and giveth grace to the humble. The following words of Luther apply to recording angels: "We should strive not to grieve the good angels with our conduct and by what we do or neglect, but deport ourselves in such a manner that they

will neither hear nor see anything out of the way from us. For they are holy, pure spirits and cannot bear it if one leads an ungodly life or lives in unchastity and vice. If anyone does not fear God and gets into trouble and danger because of that, the good angels will let him stay bogged down and will not help him. For their protection is of such a nature that God's Word and ordinances aren't thereby trampled underfoot and that the ungodly do not remain unpunished because of their sins." (XIII, 2785)

The consistent teaching of the New Testament is that angels are greatly interested in the spiritual welfare of humanity. They assisted in the promulgation of the Law (Gal. 3:19): "The Law . . . was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Moses)." They announced the birth of John the Baptist and of our Savior; they preached the first Christmas and Easter and Ascension Day sermons, and we acknowledge this in our festival hymns:

Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth,
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth. *L. H.*, 136:1

All my heart this night rejoices,
As I hear Far and near
Sweetest angel voices.
"Christ is born," their choirs are singing,
Till the air Everywhere
Now with joy is ringing. *L. H.*, 77:1

Christ the Lord is risen again,
Christ has broken death's strong chain!
Hark, the angels shout for joy,
Singing evermore on high:
Hallelujah! *L. H.*, 190:1

Crown the Savior! Angels, crown Him!
Rich the trophies Jesus brings;
On the seat of power enthrone Him
While the vault of heaven rings.
Crown Him! Crown Him!
Crown the Savior King of kings! *L. H.*, 222:2

Angels worship in our congregation: "For this cause ought the woman to have power (a veil or covering) on her head because of the angels" (1 Cor. 11:10), meaning that the angels object to any-

thing that is unseemly. They were instrumental in bringing the glad tidings to Cornelius and his household (Acts 10). "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10). As our guardian angels they are constantly engaged in helping us in every way so that we can one day share heaven with them. Hence we should heed the admonition: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2). This blessed experience was enjoyed by Abraham (Gen. 18:2-22); Lot (Gen. 19:1, 2); Manoah (Judges 13:2-14); Gideon (Judg. 6:11-20). Much of our hospitality consists of mere entertainment of invited friends. This particular form of hospitality refers to supplying the temporary needs of guests at conventions, visiting speakers, and others, who are temporarily in need of food and shelter but not necessarily destitute. In our present time we can apply this to displaced persons and similar needy ones. Through such transient guests we at times experience such rich spiritual blessings that we who extend the hospitality are more richly blessed than those who received it. To illustrate: During World War II one of my nearest relatives served in the underwater demolition units. He was one of the "Frogmen" who removed the obstacles along the European beaches so that the assault troops could land safely. When the last beach, the one at San Raphael in southern France, had thus been opened, he was excused from further military duty, somewhat like aviators who had flown their allotted number of missions. But the need for trained men in the Pacific theater became so acute that he agreed to re-engage in active combat duty. When the news reached me, I became very despondent. I am ashamed of that weakness now, but fathers and mothers who have gone through a similar emotional crisis will understand. I had a very young minister as my house guest at that time. In fact, he had just graduated from the seminary. He was too polite and well-mannered to give his much older host the scolding that he deserved. Instead he said with great tact, "I have heard rumors to the effect that God has opened a branch office in the Pacific area, staffed by His biggest angels, and that He is looking after our boys out there." I deeply appreciated this gentle rebuke, and the thought of God's branch office full of big angels sustained me and cured me of my lack of trust in Him.

As surely as the angels watch over God's children and protect them to the limit that God will permit, so surely the angels also are instruments to execute God's wrath upon those among His creatures who transgress His commandments, and especially upon the ungodly. As an example of the former we mention 1 Chron. 21: 14-16, 17, where an angel was sent to punish David for his presumptuous enumeration of Israel. God stayed the hand of the angel when David, in sincere repentance, pleaded for mercy. But of the wicked, David says in Ps. 35:5, 6: "Let them be as chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them." An instance of this kind is recorded in 2 Kings 19:35: one angel in one night slew 185,000 warriors in Sennacherib's army and thereby forced him to abandon his siege of Jerusalem. In Acts 12:23 we are told that an angel smote King Herod with a hideous disease so that maggots were devouring his body while he was still alive. Judg. 5:20: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." In all probability these "stars" were a part of God's heavenly host, the avenging angels. (Angels are called "stars" in Job 38:7.)

Luther wrote: "God has ordained the dear angels to help us against the wicked, venomous, underhanded foe who is constantly persecuting us. There is a ceaseless conflict between angels and devils. Occasionally God lets the devil have his way to teach us that if God were not stopping him every hour, such calamities would happen all the time. This makes us more diligent in prayer and more ready to thank God for such protection. If God decides to punish us, He withdraws His hand and takes away the protection and service of His good angels and lets the devil get the best of us. His purpose is to warn us and persuade us to cleave to Him and obey Him." God really does not need such service by the angels in order to carry out His commands and His will. One thought on His part is sufficient. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." But it is God's wish and will to carry out His commands by means of servants. Here on earth He accomplishes many of His marvelous deeds by means of human beings. Why should He not also use the spirits who are immediately about His throne, as servants of His? There is, therefore, no foundation to the objection that it is not suitable for an almighty and omnipresent

God to carry out His commands and His wishes by means of servants. Holy Scripture declares in plain words that the angels serve God.

Ps. 103:20: "Bless the Lord, ye His angels . . . that do His commandments!" Dan. 7:10: "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him." The expression for serving Him in the original Hebrew is: they carry out His will. We read in Ps. 104:4: "Who maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a flaming fire." The Revised Standard Version translates: "Who maketh the winds Thy messengers, fire and flame Thy ministers." According to this translation the psalmist says: When You, O Lord, wish to do something, even the winds and the flames can be made servants of Yours. In other words, God can carry out His great deeds by means of what we call natural powers and laws. But this verse is quoted in Heb. 1:7, and there the Holy Spirit plainly applies it to the heavenly hosts: "And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." We therefore interpret this passage in Psalm 104 thus: "You make Your angels to be such beings that they can carry out Your commands with the speed of the wind and that they are as bright and shiny as a great light." Compare 2 Kings 2:11: the fiery chariot and horses which took Elijah to heaven.

Luther: "It is indeed true that God could preserve us and could protect us from the devil and all adversities by Himself, without the aid of angels. He could create human beings without the need of parents, as He did in the case of Adam and Eve; He could rule countries and people without princes; He could cause brightness without sun or stars; He could give us our bread without the need of plowing and other work. But He does not do things this way; He has ordained that always one creature should serve another. Let us, therefore, learn that God protects and helps us through His angels, and we should be grateful to Him for it." (XIII, 1258)

Luther's comment on Gen. 24:7: "'The Lord . . . shall send His angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son.' The great princes of heaven have nothing more important to do than to make preparations and arrangements for the bridegroom, join the groom and the bride together, prepare the wedding, and guard the children and the household. For the angels are not far from

us in heaven, idle, and occupying themselves with trivialities. Everything that we have is preserved and protected by them. Abraham knew this and said, The angel will be my ambassador, will do the courting, and will persuade the bride and her parents to give their consent." (I, 1685, 1687)

A most strange and mysterious example of how angels serve God is found in the history of the suffering of our Lord and Savior, namely, that an angel from heaven came and strengthened our Lord in His great agony in the garden of Gethsemane. A creature strengthening the Creator!

Let Thine angel guard my soul
From the Evil One's dark power.
All his thousand wiles control,
Warning, guiding me each hour,
Until my final rest be come
And Thine angel bear me home.

Luther comments on Ps. 91:11: "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways,' that is, in bed, in church, in the city and in the field; in short, wherever we go, His holy angel shall go with us, also when we die and take our journey into another world. I have no idea where to go when I die, but my companions, the holy angels, know the way very well" (X, 1062). "The good angels have been made higher than human beings. We ought to serve them rather than have them serve us. But their nature is one of humility, love, and friendliness. They are deeply sympathetic toward our great needs. They do not consider themselves too high and mighty to serve us poor sinners. They are round about us when we are pious and God-fearing, to protect us from evil and to preserve us. And having preserved us in this life here upon earth, they are also with us when we are called out of this world. That also is a great source of comfort for us human beings. For when we are to leave this world for another one and know not at all what to do and what to expect at the moment of death, God has ordained His good angels that they should accompany us and direct us to the place where He wants us to go." This is based on Scripture. Our Savior tells us in the parable of Dives and Lazarus that when Lazarus died, the angels carried him or his soul to Abraham's bosom in heaven. We are convinced that the angels do this for all dying believers. A member of one of my confirmation classes

lay dying. She had suffered very severely, and her heartbroken mother could not adjust herself to the thought that she would lose her daughter. I am sure that it was partly to help the mother in her great distress that our heavenly Father permitted the following to happen: While I was making a call, the young girl, who had been unconscious for several hours, awakened and recognized us. I prayed with her, and she began to thank me, when suddenly she turned her face toward the opposite wall of the room and said, "Oh, Pastor, oh, Mother, oh, how beautiful they are! Don't you see them? Oh, aren't they most beautiful?" Then she stretched out her arms and said, "Oh, how wonderful!" And with that she sank back on her pillow, and her soul had left her body. I know that some people will say that she was dying and that she was in a form of delirium; but I know that she was fully awake and perfectly conscious, and I will always believe that the Lord permitted her to see with her mortal eyes the escort of angels that came to bear her precious soul to her heavenly home. And this was a source of great comfort to her mother.

The Christian hymn writer sings of the soul of a dying believer:

A moment's space, and gently, wondrously,
Released from earthly ties,
Elijah's chariot bears her up to thee,
Through all these lower skies
To yonder shining regions,
While down to meet her come
The blessed angel legions
And bid her welcome home. *L. H.*, 619:3

My soul and body I commend
Into Thy hands; Thine angel send
To guide me home and cheer my heart
When Thou dost call me to depart. *L. H.*, 600:1

How happy, therefore, shall I be
When life's frail thread is broken;
When holy angels carry me
To joys that ne'er were spoken;
When I behold Him face to face,
When I have gained that blessed place
Prepared for me by Jesus. *Ev. Luth. H.-B.*, 189:5

The angels will play an important part on the Day of Resurrection.

1. They Will Sound the Trumpets of God

Matt. 24:31: The Son of Man . . . "shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet." 1 Cor. 15:51, 52: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." 1 Thess. 4:16: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise." (Nothing in Scripture supports the popular belief that the archangel Gabriel will blow the trumpet.)

2. They Will Gather the Resurrected People

Matt. 24:31: "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (cf. Matt. 25:31, 32). Mark 13:27: "Then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." Ps. 50:3-6: "Our God shall come, and . . . He shall call to the heavens [angels] from above, and to the earth [saints], that He may judge His people: Gather My saints together unto Me. . . . For God is Judge Himself."

3. They Will Divide Those Whom They Have Gathered into Two Groups

The good will be placed on the right, the evil on the left of Christ. Matt. 13:49: "At the end of the world the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just." Matt. 25:31-33: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left." Luke 9:26: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." Luke 12:9: "But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (the angels who come with Christ to judge the world). 2 Thess. 1:7-9: "The Lord Jesus shall be re-

vealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. . . ." Jude 14, 15: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." The two angels who were present in their white apparel when Jesus ascended into heaven said to the disciples (Acts 1:11): "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Jesus ascended in the company of His glorious holy angels, and so with the same holy angels He will also return to judgment. If, as we read in Gal. 3:19, "The Law . . . was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," then the angels will be much happier and surer to be present when the promises of the Gospel are fulfilled in those whom the Lord shall take to heaven with Him on the Day of Judgment.

1 Cor. 6:2, 3: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" In the great Day of Judgment the saints will intelligently and cordially approve and endorse the sentence pronounced by Christ on wicked men and wicked angels. It appears to be God's plan that sentence be pronounced not only by the Son of Man upon man, but by men, themselves redeemed from their own sins, upon those who have chosen death rather than life. The redeemed will also pronounce sentence upon those mighty powers of evil, the devil and his angels, who have seduced men but from whose grasp the saints have been saved. (There is no hint that the good angels need to submit to such a judgment. It apparently applies only to the evil angels.) Rev. 19:1-3: "After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord, our God; for true and righteous are His judgments, for He . . . hath avenged the blood of His servants . . . and again they said, Alleluia."

4. *They Will Cast the Evildoers into Hell After the Judgment*

Matt. 13:41, 42: "The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire." This is repeated in the same chapter, vv. 49, 50.

We must note, however, that the angels cannot be the ones who actually restore life to the dead, for that is something which only He can accomplish who formed the first man of the dust of the earth and who alone can re-form the bodies of the dead from the dust to which they have returned. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves. . . . And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live" (Ezek. 37:12-14). Hence we attribute the resurrection of the dead directly to God, indirectly to His angels, who are His instruments, who serve Christ, their Lord, sounding the trumpet before the resurrection; who gather the resurrected ones from all over the earth to the place of judgment; who divide them into the two groups, the saved and the lost, and who cast the lost into hell and accompany the saved into heaven.

May we Thy precepts, Lord, fulfill
And do on earth our Father's will
As angels do above;
Still walk in Christ, the living Way,
With all Thy children and obey
The law of Christian love. *L. H.*, 412:1

When we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," then we are praying that we may fulfill the Law of God as His angels do above. In heaven they all do God's will. "Are they not *all* ministering spirits?" In heaven every knee bows to Christ, and every tongue confesses that Jesus is the Lord. Angels and arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim, powers and dominions, thrones and principalities, all the angelic host, sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." On earth it is not so. The people doing God's will are to be found only here and there; they are few and far between. And so Jesus tells us in the Lord's Prayer that we should take the holy angels as examples and do God's will on earth as

the angels perform His will above, perfectly, flawlessly. We must, therefore, constantly pray to the Lord that He will grant unto us this grace, that we may more and more approach the perfection of the angels in the doing of God's will. What displeases God displeases God's holy angels, because His will is their will. They will forsake those who live in wickedness and sin and who are consequently forsaken of God. The holy angels praise God, their Creator (Ps. 103:20; Is. 6:3). We also must follow their example and praise Him (Ps. 34:2). The holy angels are called humble spirits because they cover their face and their feet when they stand before the throne of God (Isaiah 6); so the holy and beloved and elect of God must put on humility (Col. 3:12) and cling to it (1 Peter 5:5). The holy angels are God's children and are called angels of light. We also must be children of light (Luke 16:8); must walk as becometh children of light (Eph. 5:8); must abstain from works of darkness (Rom. 13:12). Angels are loving spirits, they love God and man; we also must love God above all things, with all our hearts and all our souls and with all our might; we must love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37, 39). Angels like to be where God's Word is taught and heard (1 Cor. 11:10). We, too, must love the Word of God and gather together in the house of the Lord in order to hear His Word and to keep it in our hearts, that it may bring fruit with patience. The holy angels fight against the devil and his wicked angels (Revelation 12). Also in this respect we must follow their example, putting on the whole armor of God, taking the sword of the Spirit and guarding ourselves with the shield of faith so that we may resist the devil and overcome him (Eph. 6:11). Let us always remember what great love and mercy the Lord has shown us that He gives us these holy angels, these heroes, these princes of heaven, to be our guardians and our protectors.

On account of the manifold and beneficial activity of the good angels it is proper that we should esteem them highly and be careful not to offend them by any evil deeds. However, it is improper and idolatrous to worship them by prayer. We have no command for this, no promises for such a practice; nor do we find an instance where this was done with divine approval. But two instances are recorded in Rev. 19:10; 22:9, where such service was

repudiated by an angel. As St. Augustine says: "We honor the angels by our love, not by our service, and we build them no temples." They do not wish to be thus venerated by us because they know that Christians themselves are temples of God. The Smalcald Articles grant that the angels pray for us in heaven but deny that on that account we must pray to them and worship them.

When we celebrate Holy Communion, we declare: "It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory! Hosanna in the highest!"

Unnumbered choirs before the shining throne
Their joyful anthems raise
Till heaven's glad halls are echoing with the tone
Of that great hymn of praise
And all its host rejoices,
And all its blessed throng
Unite their myriad voices
In one eternal song. *L. H.*, 619:8